

Site M:26/10/27

The Lowry Villa/ The Blue House

117 West Montgomery Avenue, Rockville Private

Built: 1888/89

The vivid blue color of this picturesque villa located at the intersection of three heavily traveled roads has long made it a Rockville "landmark". It features an eclectic sampling of roof lines, projecting bays, novelty windows, and applied decoration over its wooden siding. The Eastlake style jigsaw and turned scrollwork bracketing and lintel pendants on the wrap-around verandah ^{are} painted in contrasting black and white to accentuate the varying shapes and shadows.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. 7m:26/10/27

Magi No. 1650432604

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic The Lowry Villaand/or common The Blue House

2. Location

street & number 117 West Montgomery Avenue not for publicationcity, town Rockville vicinity of congressional district 8state Maryland county Montgomery

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> public	<u> </u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture
<u> </u> building(s)	<u> </u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> </u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial
	<u> </u> not applicable	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military
			<u> </u> museum
			<u> </u> park
			<u> </u> private residence
			<u> </u> religious
			<u> </u> scientific
			<u> </u> transportation
			<u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Judith Rosenblum and Larry Willetsstreet & number 117 West Montgomery Avenue telephone no.: 279-2473city, town Rockville state and zip code Maryland 20850

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records liber 5817street & number Montgomery County Courthouse folio 756city, town Rockville state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register - West Montgomery Ave. Historic District
M-NCPPC - 1976date Locally designated historic district - 1974
 federal state county localpository for survey records City of Rockvillecity, town Rockville state Maryland 20850

7. Description

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Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This distinctive and substantial 1889 house is located in Beall's Subdivision, at the corner of West Montgomery Avenue and North Van Buren Street. Of frame construction, it rises three stories over a brick foundation to a slate roof. Its irregular massing, contrasting surface decoration, romantic revival window shapes and angled linear form include all the the necessary ingredients to be described as a picturesque villa - an eclectic mixture of Queen Anne and Eastlake, with Stick style and Jacobean elements.

The basic form of the house is irregular, with multiple roofs including gables, hip on gable, pent and low pitch. There are gabled dormers front and back, various shape and height bays and both horizontal and vertical emphasis in applied decoration.

The main facade faces south (West Montgomery Avenue). The southwest corner is a two-story gable-roofed bay that is wrapped by the verandah. This verandah arises on the east side of the house, zigzags around the four corners of the two front blocks and terminates at the midpoint of the west side. Its turned porch columns, Jacobean/Eastlake pattern scroll work brackets, lintel pendants and balusters are a focal point with their black and white paint which highlights the shapes and shadows and contrasts with the blue of the house.

Above the low pitch shed porch roof, the verticality of the house is emphasized by the projecting left side block which carries two floors with two windows of different shape on each floor. Patterned horizontal bands of molded shape are applied between the floors. The third floor windows are cut off with an angle pointing to the gable apex and repeating the gable pitch. The apex is decorated with a sunburst shape millwork decoration. A towering chimney is set square above the apex.

The double-leaf entry door is set in the recessed East gable end block. This block has a diamond shaped window on the first floor, round window on the second and a gabled dormer on the third. Further east, the entire cross gable is a three floor bay, the first two stories of octagonal shape, the third story a square, overhanging and projected out on curved brackets ending in dropped pendants.

The rear (north) elevation presents a medley of varying roof lines, including off-center dormers and pent roof service porch below two chimneys (one angled, one square). The 4 bay first floor section is a modern enlargement; it has a shed roof and raised entrance door.

On the west side the builder surrounded the main square block with a continuation of decorative elements. Parts of the front first floor bay are evident, as well as another one story octagonal bay centered on the facade, and a second floor octagonal bay under projecting curved brackets hugs the west/southwest corner. The side of this gable facing the front facade has entablature and pitch corresponding to the front gable eave and cornice, and appears to be a continuation of the front gable block. Here at the verandah's

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117 West Montgomery

#7 CONTINUATION P. 7.1

terminal point is a round window of patterned stained glass.

The house is covered with narrow lap siding with fish-scale shingles on most of the third floor gables. Besides the applied panels on the south facade, there are bands of fish-scale shingles between the second and third floor of the west facade. The majority of the windows are Queen Anne/Jacobean large "fancy" windows of one large pane topped by a pane surrounded by small-paned beveled square.

Overall this house is a remarkable combination of design elements of varying shape, pattern and material.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1889 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Blue House is a noteworthy example of the eclectic "picturesque villa"; it combines elements of the Queen Anne, Eastlake, Stick and Jacobean architectural styles and decorations. Its site at or near the intersection of three busy thoroughfares and its colorful paint make it one of the most familiar landmarks to travelers through Rockville. The exterior is little altered.

This house was built for a career Marine Corps officer who had previously summered in Rockville and desired a permanent residence in the newest style. Major Horatio Lowry purchased this prime corner lot for \$800 from Margaret Beall in 1888.¹ According to an inscribed brick in the attic chimney stack, the house was completed February 27, 1889. Stories persist that while the Lowrys were in residence between 1889 and 1896, fellow Marine Corps Officer John Philip Sousa was a frequent visitor and his band played on the front lawn.

After 1900 the Lowry house was rented to professional and prominent citizens like Dr. A. J. Morrison who advertised his medical practice at "The Lowry Villa".² The house was valued at \$2,900 by the Tax Assessor in 1910.³

Between 1918 and 1965 Dr. Pratt and then his daughter Ethel Thompson lived in the house. Owner Stanley Dietz installed panelling in several interior rooms. The Struba family restored the front porch during its brief ownership in the late 1970s.

1. Montgomery County Land Records, Liber JA 9, folio 257
2. Montgomery County Sentinel, 1905
3. Montgomery County Tax Assessments, 1898–1908

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Montgomery County Land & Assessment Records
Montgomery County Sentinel, 1888 and 1905
1917 Real Estate Atlas
Portrait & Biographical Sketches of the 6th Congressional District
(1898)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 13,000 square feet

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

65' fronting on north side of West Montgomery Avenue, 200'
fronting on North Van Buren Street

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne W. Cissel

organization Peerless Rockville

date August 1984

street & number P.O. Box 4262

telephone 762-0096

city or town Rockville

state Maryland 20850

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

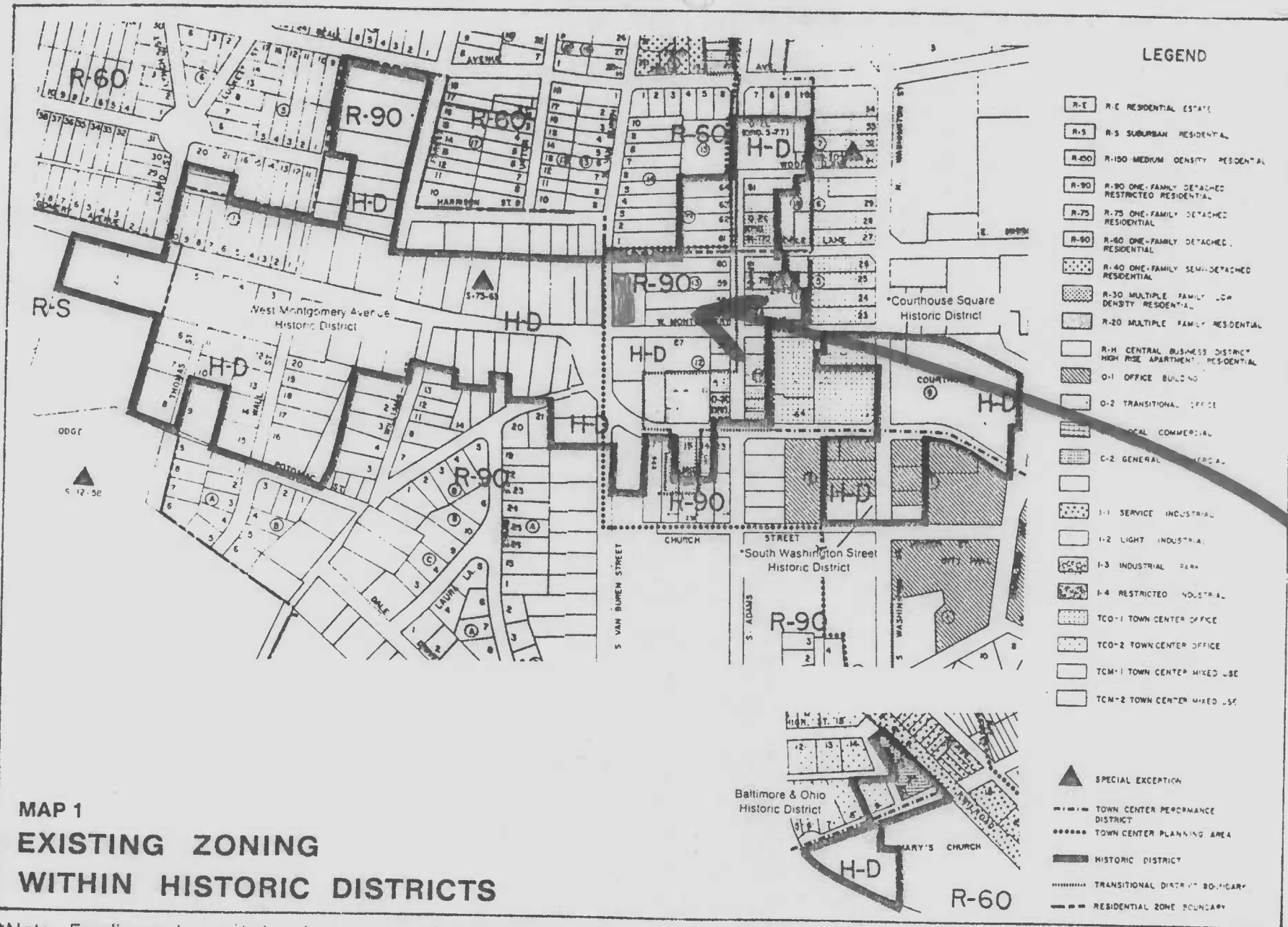


117 West Montgomery Avenue

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Lowry Villa/Blue House
From 1982 Peerless Rockville calendar

MAP 1 **EXISTING ZONING** **WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

*Note: For discussion and planning purposes South Washington Street and the Courthouse Square district are considered independent Historic Districts even though they are shown on the existing zoning map as one district.



M: 26/10/27
 The Lowry Villa/The Blue House
 117 West Montgomery Ave.
 Rockville



1017-10

RICHARD H. ANDREWS
1608 Farragut Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26/10/27
LOWRY VILLA / THE BLUE HOUSE
117 N. Montgomery Ave.
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION
AUGUST, 1984



1017-9

RICHARD H. ANDREWS
1608 Farragut Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26/10/27
LEWRY VILLAGE THE BLUE HOUSE
117 H. Montgomery Ave.
SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ELEVATION
AUGUST, 1984